Saint Paul Planning Commission Joint Meeting with the Heritage Preservation Commission City Hall Conference Center 15 Kellogg Boulevard West

Minutes November 6, 2008

A joint meeting of the Planning Commission and the Heritage Preservation Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Thursday, November 6, 2008, at 5:45 p.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners Mmes. Donnelly-Cohen, Lu, Morton, Wencl; and

Present: Messrs. Alton, Barrera, Bellus, Goodlow, Gordon, Johnson, Kramer, Nelson,

Spaulding, and Ward.

Commissioners

Absent:

Mmes. *Faricy, *Porter, *Smitten, and Messrs. *Commers, and *Margulies.

*Excused

Also Present: Heritage Preservation Commissioners: Paul Larson, Chair, John Manning, Lee

Meyer, Carol Carey, Pat Igo, Steve Trimble, Carole Kralicek, Shari Taylor Wilsey, Susan Bartlett Foote, Mark Thomas and Diane Trout-Oertel. Amy Spong, Christine Boulware, and Cory Rucker, Department of Safety and Inspections staff. Larry Soderholm, Planning Administrator; Lucy Thompson, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Chair's Announcements

Chair Alton said that he was pleased the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) and the Planning Commission could have this joint meeting on the Historic Preservation Plan. Chair Alton then ask all the commissioners to introduce themselves, and announced upcoming meetings.

II. Planning Administrator's Announcements

Larry Soderholm said that he had received a request from the Metropolitan Council for people who would like to be on Station Art Committees to advise them on public art installations at Central Corridor Stations. (The HPC was specifically asked for representatives because of the Lowertown and University-Raymond historic districts.)

IV. PUBLIC HEARING: <u>Historic Preservation Chapter</u> – Item from the Comprehensive Planning Committee. (*Lucy Thompson*, 651/266-6578 or Amy Spong, 651/266-9079)

Chair Alton announced that the Saint Paul Planning Commission and the Heritage Preservation Commission are holding a joint public hearing on the Historic Preservation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Notice of the public hearing was published in the Legal Ledger on October 9, 2008, and was mailed to the citywide Early Notification System list, preservation advocacy organizations and agencies, and other interested parties.

Amy Spong, HPC staff, said how excited she is to be at this point. The need for a Historic Preservation Plan has been talked about for many years. This is the first time one will be adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan. To do this Plan, the City received a \$17,000 grant from the State Historic Preservation Office, which it matched with cash and staff in-kind services.

Anne Ketz, from the 106 Group, the City's consultant on the Plan, gave a brief overview of the planning process, key guiding principles, and how the Plan is envisioned to be used. In terms of process, there was a community-based task force, as well as a City staff team. The task force consisted of a broad range of perspectives--residents, preservation advocacy groups, tradespeople working on preservation projects, and preservation experts. A Core Team from City departments was used to ensure that the strategies in the Plan have City buy-in, and are politically and financially feasible. Ms. Ketz stated that the Plan is not intended to be prescriptive, but to establish a philosophy of preservation for the city. It is a vision for the city on how to make preservation work with economic development, sustainability, quality of life, and maintaining a sense of place. The City has done a lot of preservation over the years, but efforts have been very inconsistent. With this Plan, there will be a shared vision.

Lucy Thompson, PED staff, reviewed the seven strategies in the plan. The Preservation Plan serves two "masters." While it is a Comprehensive Plan Chapter that will guide planning policy for the City of Saint Paul, it is also a strategic plan for the Heritage Preservation Commission.

Ms. Thompson said she received three written comments on the Plan, which were included in the Commissioners' packets.

Chair Alton read the rules of procedure for the public hearing.

The following people spoke:

- 1. Ms. Karen Reid, Neighbor Development Alliance, 401 South Wabasha, Saint Paul, MN. 55107. Ms. Reid's concern is that the Plan needs to come to grips with the true cost of its implementation. She said that in affordable housing projects, there can be trade-offs between exterior preservation work and improvements that reduce ongoing household operating costs. Ms. Reid suggested changes to Appendix 2 to clarify the goal of the District del Sol revitalization effort and the nature of ethnic immigration on the West Side.
- 2. Andrew Hine, a resident of the historic brewery neighborhood, and Secretary of Historic Saint Paul (HSP), a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing Saint Paul's cultural and architectural resources. Mr. Hine said that HSP believes preservation is more than feel-good activism; it truly is an economic driver. It is hard to imagine Saint Paul without the Glockenspiel, Happy Gnome, Landmark Center, University Club and other historic places. While modern architecture is appreciated and construction of new buildings is encouraged, saving valuable assets is the sensible and prudent thing to do. Historic Saint Paul looks forward to helping the City identify and preserve what we have.
- 3. Chad Kulas representing the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Kulas said that the Chamber recognizes the importance of historic preservation. Earlier this year, they conducted discussions about downtown Saint Paul. Over 100 business owners, residents

and other community members people participated, and all spoke of the importance of maintaining the old, beautiful buildings we have throughout downtown. Historic preservation plays a very important role, but there are many other factors to consider when it comes to development. On page 8 of the Historic Preservation Plan, 1.11 states "to give preference to projects with historic preservation components when considering all capital improvement funding requests." The wording in that section leads one to think historic preservation should have a preference over other factors, such as economic vitality, job creation or transit-oriented development. Saint Paul has a reputation of making it arduous to redevelop, and the Chamber does not want to see that reputation grow. Saint Paul has a history of doing great work when it comes to historic preservation. The Chamber believes it will continue that tradition, and wants to ensure it is done with a balanced approach.

4. Patricia Lindgren from Councilmember Thune's Office said Dave Thune is very excited about the Plan. He realizes how important our historic assets are, but that is not why she came. Ms. Lindgren was sent by the Executive Director of the District 5 Planning Council to state that they strongly recommend a role for district councils before the demolition of historic properties. On East 7th Street, the current demolition of an enormous number of historic assets is causing great concern for Districts 4 and 5.

Commissioner Spaulding wanted clarification from two of the individual's testimonies regarding the mention of preferential treatment for historic issues within the capital improvement budget. Amy Spong said the intent is to put preservation on an "even playing field" when decisions are being made. HPC Chair Larson added that the issue over the years has been whether an existing building is looked at as a resource, prior to any new development.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Donnelly-Cohen moved to close the public hearing, leave the record open for written testimony until 4:30 p.m. on Monday, November 10, 2008, and to refer the matter back to the Comprehensive Planning Committee for review and recommendation. Commissioner Wencl seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

HPC Commissioner Carey asked for a description the process as the Plan moves forward toward adoption.

Larry Soderholm, PED staff, said there are six citywide chapters of the Comprehensive Plan that are moving through the Planning Commission. The Comprehensive Planning Committee of the Commission is reviewing public testimony on each of the chapters. The committee will make a recommendation to the full Planning Commission, which in turn expects to recommend them to the Mayor and the City Council in December and January. The City Council can choose whether it wants to hold its own public hearings on the chapters. Then the Council will adopt them, contingent on approval by the Metropolitan Council. The deadline for the City to send a fully complete Comprehensive Plan, which meets legal requirements, to the Met Council is May 25, 2009.

HPC chair Larson said the HPC will want to provide its comments to the Planning Commission, and can also sent its separate recommendation to the Mayor and the City Council.

Lucy Thompson stated that this step--a Preservation Chapter for the Comprehensive Plan--is an important moment for the City. To be able to consider preservation in the context of the other

Comp Plan chapters will strengthen its role in making Saint Paul a great place to live, work and play. Also, this effort has brought together the Planning Commission and HPC, and commits them to work together on implementation, which is another big step

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Meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

Recorded and prepared by Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary Planning and Economic Development Department, City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,	Approved(Date)
	Larry Soderholm, AICP
Planning Administrator	Secretary of the Planning Commission

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